

Reading and role play – Interactive reading space



Context

I am a trainee teacher on the School Centred Initial Teacher Training in East London Schools (SCITTELS) school direct programme. I am based in a relatively new; three form entry primary school in East London. In Key Stage 1 there is a large focus on reading, with all classrooms set up with a reading corner. As a part of my training programme I am developing a reading for pleasure initiative to introduce to my Year 2 class.

Research inspiration and rationale

During a centre based training day I was inspired by a guest lecturer who spoke to us about the TaRs research. We engaged in activities to identify our own habits as readers. It was a stark realisation for me and many others in my cohort when we struggled to recall children's authors aside from some of the most common including JK Rowling, Roald Dahl and Beatrix Potter. Worse results were when we were asked to recall children's poets and illustrators! The TaRs research explained that in order to successfully integrate reading for pleasure, children needed to experience reading aloud, have informal book talks and recommendations; have social reading environments and opportunities for independent reading. I decided to make reading for pleasure a focus in my training by creating a space and opportunity for children to read aloud and have informal book talks in a social reading environment.

Aims

My aim was to encourage the children to read aloud and have informal book talks in a social environment. As my class already has an inviting reading space for the children I wanted to focus on activities for them whilst they are in that space to encourage them to engage in conversations with each other. The introduction of the props and costumes relating to specific books was to encourage the children to discuss the books and act the out the stories in them.

Outline

As part of getting the classroom ready for the year, each Key Stage 1 room had to include a large book corner and a role play area. The topic for the term was 'Tunnels and Turrets' and my class teacher painted a picture of a castle for the background and a wall to separate it from the classroom. We were stuck for ideas of how to get the children engaged with the space and that's when I decided to use it as a part of my reading for pleasure work. All the children had seen the role play area for a couple of weeks and knew it didn't contain anything. One evening I put all the books, props and costumes in the role play corner but didn't get a chance to introduce it before a child discovered the new additions, got excited and told the other children. The children were all really excited and eager to have a go in the new role play/reading area.

Impact

I gave the children the opportunity to use the area with very little direction except it is reading time and they will have a partner. The children used the area in different ways, some read the books and acted them out using the figurines and some dressed up and pretended to be the characters. One pair dressed up and read aloud to each other.



Reflections on impact the TaRs research had on practice

The TaRs research has enabled me as a trainee teacher to reflect on my reading practice. It has made me think about developing my own knowledge of children's literature and prompted me to develop reading spaces for the children. When I have my own classroom I will work further on this and widen my understanding of ways in which I can encourage children to read for enjoyment.